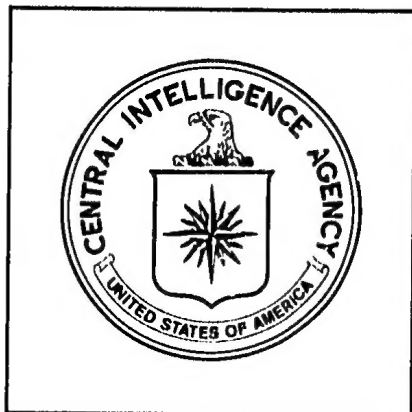


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STAFF NOTES:

Middle East Africa South Asia

State Dept. review
completed

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Saudi Arabia-Oman*A Corridor to the Arabian Sea*

Prince Saud ibn Faysal, Saudi minister of state for foreign affairs, told Ambassador Akins on June 14 that Riyadh is giving serious consideration to requesting a 60-kilometer-wide corridor through Dhofar to the Arabian Sea as part of an overall border settlement with Oman. The corridor would run along the present Oman-South Yemen border. According to Prince Saud, an oil pipeline would eventually be constructed through the corridor and a port developed on the Arabian Sea.

The Saudi proposal is, in fact, not new and Oman has already turned it aside at least once. Omani foreign minister Zawawi told the US last February about such a Saudi proposal. At that time, Muscat reportedly told Riyadh that Oman would not cede its sovereignty over western Dhofar, but that Sultan Qabus would "cheerfully" agree to Saudi facilities being constructed in the area.

The Saudi interest in a corridor through Dhofar appears hard to justify in the terms in which Prince Saud described the plan. The problems and cost of constructing a pipeline traversing the inhospitable Rub al-Khali--the Empty Quarter--in southeastern Saudi Arabia would be enormous. Some observers also suggest that the summer monsoon that touches the western coast of Dhofar might limit the use of a port. When Ambassador Akins suggested that a more feasible way to export oil from the Empty Quarter would be to build a pipeline--and then pump Saudi oil through it to the Gulf of Oman--Prince Saud replied that it would be best to have an all-Saudi line regardless of the cost.

The Saudis may be floating the corridor idea with other things in mind. A pipeline to the Arabian Sea would mean that they would not be hostage to possible

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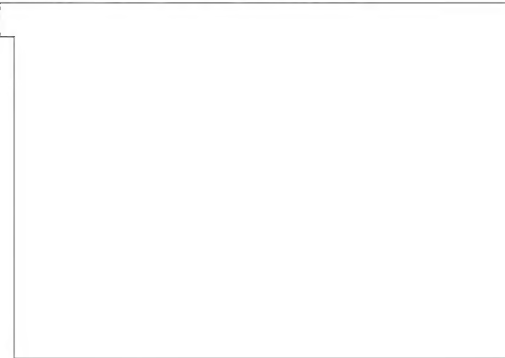
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interference with free navigation to oil tankers
through the Strait of Hormuz.

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Saudi Arabia

Regicide to Trial

The investigation into the assassination in late March of King Faysal by a nephew, Prince Faysal ibn Musaid, has been completed, according to Ambassador Akins. The prince will be handed over to a special three-judge court for trial.

The expectation is that the trial will be speedy and that the prince will be executed within the next few days. Friday following noon prayers is a traditional time for public executions. The Wahhabi version of Islamic law prescribes the death penalty unless all of the victims' sons request clemency.

[REDACTED]

the investigation produced no evidence of accomplices, no foreign involvement, and no outside influence. Prince Faysal was described as sane, but emotionally unbalanced at the time of the murder. He is reported to have said he killed the King to "save Saudi Arabia." He intended also to kill several other princes, as well as oil minister Yamani.

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